BS 1225
G5
Copy 1

THE MESSAGE OF MOSES

AND

MODERN HIGHER CRITICISM

A LECTURE

Given in Houston Hall, University of Pennsylvania

BY

Rev. FRANCIS E. GIGOT, D.D.

Professor of Sacred Scripture in St. Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers, N. Y.
Author of Several Works Introductory to the Study of the Holy Scriptures

NEW YORK CINCINNATI CHICAGO

BENZIGER BROTHERS

Printers to the Holy Apostolic See

1915

THE MESSAGE OF MOSES

AND

MODERN HIGHER CRITICISM

A LECTURE

Given in Houston Hall, University of Pennsylvania

BY

Rev. FRANCIS E. GIGOT, D.D.

Professor of Sacred Scripture in St. Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers, N. Y.
Author of Several Works Introductory to the Study of the Holy Scriptures

NEW YORK CINCINNATI CHICAGO

BENZIGER BROTHERS

Printers to the Holy Apostolic See

1915

BS1225
.G5

Imprimi Potest.

REMIGIUS LAFORT, S.T.D.,
Librorum Censor.

PEEKSKILL, N. Y., March 25, 1915.

Copyright, 1915, by BENZIGER BROTHERS

©CLA398723

MAY -7 1915

Recat. HLR 13 W4

PREFACE

THE present Lecture was delivered in Houston Hall, University of Pennsylvania, on March 17th, 1915. It forms part of the Free Public Lectures given there under the auspices of The Catholic Students' Organization Committee of that University. Prepared for a general audience, the Lecture avoids as far as possible technical details and linguistic discussions, and lays no claim to be considered as a treatment of all the various aspects presented by the important topic with which it deals. Within its small compass, however, it supplies the information required for an accurate comprehension of the main points at issue between the traditional position concerning the message of Moses and the theories of Modern Higher Criticism. It likewise sets forth in a brief, yet it is hoped sufficient, manner the principal grounds which can be appealed to in order to vindicate the correctness of Jewish and Christian tradition concerning

Moses' literary work and monotheistic message. It is the Author's intention at some future time to deal fully with the particular points which he has simply touched upon in short footnotes. Meantime, the lecture is published at the request of persons deeply interested in the topic under discussion, who are persuaded that its publication will prove useful to theological students and to general readers.

St. Joseph's Seminary,
March 24, 1915.

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Traditional View concerning Moses. Its Rejection by Modern Higher Criticism. The New Theories widely received, yet untenable. General Contention of the Higher Critics.

Ist PART

The Literary Contents of the Pentateuch Investigated. The Four Documents admitted by Higher Criticism: Two Prophetical Narratives; The Book of Deuteronomy; The Priestly Writing. Deuteronomy and the Priestly Writing can be proved as from Moses' pen. The other Two Documents were utilized by Israel's Lawgiver. Hence, all the Literary Contents can be traced back to Moses.

IInd PART

The Legislative Contents of the Pentateuch Examined. Views of the Higher Critics concerning Order and Date of the Pentateuchal Codes. The Critical Theories not necessary to account for the Development of Hebrew Legislation. The Critical Theories run counter to fully-ascertained Facts. Some General Objections of the Higher Critics disposed of.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

THE MESSAGE OF MOSES AND MODERN HIGHER CRITICISM

In Jewish and Christian circles the name of Moses is a blessed and household word. It denotes to the rank and file of believers the great liberator of Israel from Egypt, the prophetical leader of the ancient Hebrews through the Wilderness of Sinai to the border of Chanaan, the monotheistic lawgiver of his race, and the inspired writer of the Pentateuch or first five books of the Old Testament. Such was Moses according to the constant tradition of ages which we find reflected in the Scriptures of the Old Law and in those of the New.

Venerable and authoritative as this tradition may appear to us, its testimony is more and more confidently declared null and void by the thorough-going advocates of the Modern Higher Criticism. Such testimony, these men boldly assert, has been fully tested by a host of able and

independent scholars for upwards of a century, and its value is nowadays admitted only by biassed or by blind followers of Ecclesiastical authority. Let anyone, they further tell us, examine for himself the new theories which have been gradually framed to supersede the old traditional authorship of the Pentateuch, and he will readily see that, while these theories account for the facts on which they rest, the traditional view of Moses' message and work must be regarded as decidedly untenable.[1]

Such is the general contention of the Modern Higher Critics, such also is the direct challenge with which they confront the defenders of the traditional position. To go against this contention and to take up this challenge, one needs indeed a stout heart at the present day. Prominent scholars all over the world have become the stanch advocates of the new theories,[2] and works of all sizes and purposes have placed their views

[1] For instance, C. F. Burney writes: "This latter hypothesis (i. e. the Graf-Wellhausen theory), with the reconstruction which it involves of our view of the development of Israel's religion *after* 750 B. C., may now be regarded as proved up to the hilt for any thinking and unprejudiced man who is capable of estimating for himself the character and value of the evidence." (Journal of Theological Studies, April, 1908, p. 321.)

[2] Cf. C. A. Briggs, The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch, p. 143 sq. (N. Y., 1893.)

within reach of the young and of the old. Histories of the Old Testament and Histories of the Religion of Israel have been written on the assumption that the old traditional position is forever disproved, and in all such writings the most radical and most irreligious theories are propounded as the undoubted truth concerning the origin and development of Israel's history and religion.[3] It would seem, therefore, that to defend the cause of tradition is to defend a lost cause, and that to assail the conclusions of Modern Higher Criticism concerning the Message of Moses is to waste time and energy. And yet, to the mind of the present Lecturer there is conviction that such is not really the case. Nay more, to his mind there is no doubt that a dispassionate study of the principal positions of the Higher Critics proves such positions to be untenable, and that the careful gathering up of whatever elements of truth may be recognized in the new theories but strengthens the traditional view concerning the person and message of Moses.

[3] Of this description are: H. Oort and I. Hookyaas, The Bible for Learners, tr. (Boston, 1888); C. H. Toy, The History of the Religion of Israel (Boston, 1894); H. P. Smith, Old Test. History (N. Y., 1903); The Religion of Israel (N. Y., 1914); L. B. Paton, The Early Religion of Israel (Boston, 1910); Morris Jastrow, Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions (N. Y., 1914); J. P. Peters, The Religion of the Hebrews (Boston, 1914).

The beginning of Modern Higher Criticism is usually referred to the second part of the eighteenth century. In those early days of critical research the traditional authorship of the Pentateuch was accepted by the French Catholic physician Jean Astruc in his epoch-making "Conjectures sur les Memoires originaux dont il paroit que Moyse s'est servi pour composer le Livre de la Genese." (Brussels, 1753.) It was likewise accepted by the German Protestant professor J. G. Eichhorn in his valuable "Einleitung in das Alte Testament,"[4] in which the name "Higher Criticism" is used for the first time to denote the investigation of the literary and historical contents of the sacred writings. But since then Higher Criticism has passed through several stages which gradually led it up to its present thorough denial of Moses' literary work and monotheistic message. Tradition indeed survives bearing the same distinct witness to the Mosaic authorship of the first five books of Holy Writ. But this tradition, Modern Higher Critics assert with one accord, is disproved by both the literary and the historical analysis of the contents of the Pentateuch itself.

[4] Cf. Eichhorn's Einleitung, edition of 1790.

I

On the basis of the literary analysis of these contents, they all claim that the only way to account for the differences in vocabulary, style, manner of representation, etc., noticeable in the Pentateuch, is by regarding the work as a compilation from four various documents all later than the time of Moses. Of course, if such be the only way to account for the literary features exhibited by the contents of our Pentateuch, the Mosaic authorship of the work must be given up. But is this really the case? Is it true that the four documents accepted by Modern Higher Criticism—viz. two parallel prophetical narratives, the oratorical Book of Deuteronomy, and the lawyer-like Priestly Writing—must be assigned to different authors who lived between 850 B. C. and some time after the return from the Babylonian Exile? Our distinct answer is that another account of the literary features of the Pentateuch, and one consistent with the Mosaic origin of its contents, can and should be maintained.

On the basis of these literary features there is no need of ascribing, as Higher Critics do, a different date and a different authorship to the Priestly Writing and to our Book of Deuter-

onomy. Both are in equally good, and by no means late, Hebrew.[5] The lawyer-like style of the Priestly Writing and the oratorical language of Deuteronomy are compatible with unity of authorship, as they undoubtedly were under the pen of Noah Webster, of Abraham Lincoln, and of other writers. That Moses was the author of the rhetorical discourses found in Deuteronomy is expressly affirmed by that book, and from the point of view of style, there is no positive reason to deny it. As far as we know, Moses, "instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and mighty in words" (Acts vii. 22), was able to make the direct and impassioned addresses recorded in that book, and the tendency to redundancy and to repetition of stereotyped phrases which appears in their style is exactly what we should expect from an early effort at public oratory in Israel. That the same orator, Moses, used also, when required, a statistical and legal language

[5] Cf. A. Dillmann, Genesis, tr., vol. 1, p. 7.—According to H. L. Strack (art. Pentateuch, in Schaff-Herzog Ency. of Religious Knowl., vol. III, p. 1795, N. Y., 1887), "The language of P (i. e. the Priestly Writing) deserves attention as an evidence for its antiquity. V. Ryssel in his careful treatise on the language of P (De Elohistae Pentateuchici Sermone, Leipsig, 1878) reaches results inconsistent with the supposition of post-exilic origin." Cf. also F. E. Spencer, in Lex Mosaica, p. 515 sqq.—F. Giesebrecht's view of P's Aramaisms is rejected by S. R. Driver, Intr. to Old Test. Lit., p. 156.

like that of the Priestly Writing is proved by the style of passages directly referred to him in the other books of the Pentateuch; such passages, for instance, as the list of Israel's encampments (Numb. xxxiii), the commands to the children of Israel (Numb. xxxiv), the Book of the Covenant (Exod. xx-xxiii), the last of which presents appended to its laws an exhortation to faithfulness to God in genuine Deuteronomic style, and thus ascribes to Moses both a legal and an oratorical manner of writing. This is proved likewise by the minute details concerning the Tabernacle, the Ark, the priestly dress, etc., for, on the one hand, they are expressly stated to have been imparted to Moses by God Himself, and, on the other, their perfect faithfulness to the corresponding elements in Egyptian worship[6] points to Moses as the one who because of his special training in Egypt could easily bear such details in mind and put them down in writing. Thus, then, we can and should account for the literary features of the Priestly Writing and of the Book of Deuteronomy without giving up the traditional authorship of these parts of the Pentateuch.

[6] Cf. W. Smith, The Book of Moses (London, 1868); see also R. V. French, Lex Mosaica, p. 22 sqq., p. 521 (London, 1894).

It is true that when we turn next to the two prophetical narratives which are admitted by the Higher Critics, we find ourselves in presence of two literary sources actually utilized in the composition of our Pentateuch. In regard to style, these narratives do differ from each other, they also do differ from those portions of the Pentateuch which, as we have just seen, should be referred to Moses' own pen. Nevertheless, the literary features of these narratives afford no reason for thinking that their contents originated centuries after Moses' death,[7] and that consequently they were not utilized by him in composing our Pentateuch. We have in the Book of Numbers (xi. 25 sqq.) a distinct proof that there were prophets among the multitudes which had been freed from Egypt, and that Moses himself knew of the existence of such prophets and approved of their spirit. We have no need, therefore, of referring ourselves to centuries after Moses to account for the prophetical tone of the

[7] J and E (i. e. the two prophetical narratives) are ascribed by many Critics to prophets of Juda and Ephraim respectively. Kuenen, Reuss, Schrader, etc., regard them both as of Ephraimitic origin. In fact, neither J nor E has any specific allusion to the divided kingdom, and this is very unnatural if either was composed after the disruption of Solomon's empire, as Critics affirm. (Cf. J. Skinner, Intern. Critical Commentary, Genesis, p. liv sq., N. Y., 1910).

two literary sources in question. Moses, himself a prophet, knew how to write, and so also did at least some of the prophets around him. That two of these in thankfulness to the God of their ancestors should record His deeds of mercy toward the patriarchs of old, and chronicle His present interventions on behalf of the people of His choice, is readily intelligible. In their eyes the God who had but lately redeemed Israel from Egypt was no other than the God who from of old had preordained all things in behalf of His elect people, and who, at sundry times, had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that their posterity would inherit the land of Chanaan. With a watchful Providence He had guided the wandering steps of these great ancestors of the Hebrew race, and with a strong arm and an outstretched hand He had in due time proceeded to fulfil His solemn promises to them. The present generation of their descendants had, indeed, by its apostasy at the foot of Sinai, proved unworthy of witnessing that fulfilment. But such fulfilment could not be frustrated, and was simply delayed for a short while. God's timely help under the trying circumstances of the journey of the Exodus and of the wanderings in the Wilderness could be easily pointed out as an un-

questionable proof of this. And so one can readily understand how two prophets in the company of Moses would feel prompted to write, for the instruction and encouragement of their fellow Hebrews, the two narratives which we find embodied in our Pentateuch. Amidst natural differences of expression, their descriptions of the journey of the Exodus, their references to places, their allusions to the productions of the Wilderness, etc., would be most accurate, as they have been verified by numerous travellers in the course of the nineteenth century.[8] That the Priestly Writer of the Pentateuch, no other than Moses,[9] as we have seen, was actually acquainted with such literary works is admitted by nearly every critic of our day. That he utilized them, adding to them, fitting them into his general scheme of history and legislation, best accounts, among other things, for the two following facts: (1) their contents which bear on events falling within Moses' lifetime are more closely fused

[8] Cf. S. C. Bartlett, From Egypt to Palestine (N. Y., 1879); F. E. Gigot, Special Introd. to the Old Test., vol. I, p. 67 sqq. (N. Y., 1901).

[9] It is confirmatory of this view, that after Exodus "the independent main stock of the Priestly Code more and more gives way to later additions, and ceases altogether, it appears, at the death of Moses." (Wellhausen, quoted by J. Orr, Problem of the Old Test., p. 340. N. Y., 1905).

with the contributions by the Priestly Writer than are those which bear on events prior to the lawgiver's time; (2) the distinct style of redaction of the same priestly writer ceases altogether at the death of Moses.[10] We are thus led to admit that Moses himself, the author of the Priestly Writing and of Deuteronomy, used the two prophetical narratives in composing our Pentateuch, so that we can account for all the literary contents of the Mosaic writings without departing in the least from the traditional authorship of the work.[11]

[10] "In the Book of Josue, P [the Priestly Writer] does not occupy the regulative position, nor supply the framework, as it does in the Pentateuch." G. A. Smith, art. Joshua, in Hastings, Bib. Dict. vol. II, p. 784.—According to Critics also, the Deuteronomic writer in Josue, is not simply D, but D^2, i. e. "a writer . . . strongly imbued with the spirit of Deuteronomy" (Driver, Intro. to Old Test. Liter., p. 104), so that the genuine Deuteronomic writer ceases also at the death of Moses, a literary fact which points to Moses as the single author of both Deuteronomy and the Priestly Writing.—Finally, R. Kittel (Hist. of the Hebrews, tr., vol. I, p. 75 sqq.) gives reasons for regarding D as the editor of J and E before they were combined in the form of Wellhausen's JE. (Cf. Exod. ix. 30 where [in the Hebrew] the divine names Jehovah, Elohim appear on Moses' lips, in the same combined manner as in Gen. ii sqq.)

[11] The length of the work does not make against this. In Egypt, in Moses' time, literature was the first and best of employments, and the "Great Harris papyrus" which is 133 ft. long by nearly 17 inches broad, goes back to that period. (Cf. G. Rawlinson, in "The Pulpit Commentary," Exodus, vol. I, pp. x, xi.)

II

Modern Higher Critics, however, do not depend solely, or even chiefly, on the literary analysis of the Pentateuch to deny Moses' literary work and monotheistic message. They principally rest this denial on their historical criticism of the legislative portions of the Mosaic writings.

These portions fall naturally into three sets of laws or Codes which Critics agree in regarding as composed in the following order: (1) the Book of the Covenant, contained in the prophetical narratives; (2) the Deuteronomic Code, embodied in our Book of Deuteronomy; and (3) the Priestly Code, an integrant part of the Priestly Writing. Now, Higher Critics pronounce these three Codes to be so incompatible on vital points, that the only way to account for their origin is by admitting that in the Pentateuch we have records of laws laid down at various periods of national history, and dealing with radically different conditions of life. Thus, according to them, the only way to view aright the Book of the Covenant is by understanding its enactments as exactly suited to the times of the Judges and of the early Kings of Israel. In this first set of laws, we are told, Jehovah is simply the national

God of Israel, in the same way as Chemos, for instance, is the national god of Moab; altars of earth or of unhewn stones can be erected in various places; sacrifices of the most elementary kind can be offered by anyone; and the people lead an agricultural life in a somewhat primitive stage of civilization. Again, to their mind, the only view to take of the second Pentateuchal Code, which they hold to be that of Deuteronomy, is to regard it as fitting in with the closing years of the Hebrew monarchy, with the time when King Josias (7th cent. B. C.) enforced the enactments of a book of the Law then found in the Temple and no other, it is claimed, than the Deuteronomic Code. This, it is affirmed, is a new and higher Code suited to a more advanced age in Hebrew history. Jehovah is now conceived not simply as the God of His people Israel, but as the only one true God. Henceforth, there must be only one sanctuary, one altar. Henceforth, the ministers of the altar in the Temple are limited to the members of the tribe of Levi, and those who had ministered as Levites at the high places of worship different from Jerusalem are to be provided with a maintenance in a rather scanty and precarious manner. Finally, present day Critics affirm that the only right way to

understand their third, the Priestly, Code, is by regarding its laws as suited to the period after the return from the Babylonian Exile. In both this Priestly Code and this period of Hebrew history, it is said, the one national concern is to organize the community on thoroughly priestly lines: the priesthood is now restricted to one single Levitical family, that of Aaron; the office of the high priest is invested with a peculiar sanctity; the Levites are made thoroughly subordinate to the priests and are provided for by means of tithes and cattle and cities and lands; the system of sacrifices and feasts, now to culminate in the Day of the Atonement, wears a new and distinctly national character and is protected by a most elaborate ritual; there is no insistence upon the one altar and sanctuary because this was already firmly established; nor any effort at enforcing monotheism because the possibility of rivalry with Jehovah on the part of other gods is no longer thought of.

Plainly, if the foregoing is a correct theory, Modern Higher Critics are justified in their thorough denial of Moses' literary work and monotheistic message. Evidently, Moses cannot be the author of records of laws framed in view of circumstances all distinctly later than

his time. Evidently, too, he is not the introducer into Israel of a monotheism which gradually evolved in the consciousness of the Hebrew nation only centuries after his death. And hence, no less evidently, there is no other way of maintaining the traditional view concerning him, save by yielding blindly to the voice of authority.

But to the mind of the present Lecturer there is no doubt that this theory of the Critics is not correct, and that there is another way[12] of accounting for the facts to which it runs counter, which other way is, moreover, in perfect harmony with the traditional position.

Of the three Codes contained in the Pentateuch, the Book of the Covenant stands naturally first, not because of its superior antiquity, but because of its preliminary character. It is a brief body of regulations intended to serve as a basis for the formal ratification of the Covenant between Jehovah and the people of Israel. Accordingly, it lays down a few simple and comprehensive rules, framed in the spirit of the religion of Jehovah, for the government of the people in their relations to one another, and in their relation to God, to which in a solemn act of wor-

12 The following sketch of it is mainly from W. H. Green, The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch, p. 144 sqq. (N. Y., 1900).

ship they were soon to pledge assent. The very agricultural allusions of this Code, to which Critics appeal as pointing to a people settled in Chanaan, are in direct harmony with its Mosaic origin and its delivery at Sinai. At that early date both Moses and the people under his guidance felt sure that they would soon be settled in full possession of the promised Land, for neither he nor they could imagine such an act of gross rebellion as that for which a lapse of forty years to be spent in the desert was actually to intervene. It would have been strange, indeed, if the law given in the midst of such circumstances did not look beyond the desert as the abode of the people, and took no note of what was in immediate prospect. It was quite appropriate for it to contemplate their expected life in Chanaan, and to give regulations respecting the fields and vineyards and olive-yards which they were shortly to possess.

The second Code contained in our Pentateuch likewise appears there in its appropriate place. After the reading of the Book of the Covenant and the national assent pledged to its observation, the way was open for a fuller development of the duties and obligations which the relation now established between the two contracting parties

naturally involved. Jehovah, as the covenant God of Israel, was henceforth to take up His abode in the midst of His people. This made it necessary that detailed instructions should be given, for which there was no occasion before, respecting the sacred Tabernacle, the sacrifices to be performed in it, the officiating priesthood, the set times for special solemnities, and in general the entire ritual to be observed by a holy people for the expression and perpetuation of their communion with a holy God. All this was embodied in the Priestly Code, in which the scanty general provisions of the Book of the Covenant were replaced by a vastly expanded and minutely specified ceremonial. Intricate and minute as this ritual Law may appear to us, it was not an altogether new thing to a people long familiar with the parallel ritual in Egyptian worship; nor was it a development implying the lapse of ages with an altered civilization and a corresponding advance of the popular notions of the divine Being and of the homage which should be paid to Him.

Finally, the Pentateuch rightly ascribes to the Deuteronomic Code the third place in its sets of Hebrew laws. At the close of the forty years' Wandering, when the great legislator was about

to die, he naturally felt it his duty to exhort to faithfulness in the service of Jehovah, their God, those whom he long knew to be a rebellious people. In view of this he recapitulated in the hearing of Israel the laws of the Book of the Covenant with such modifications and additions as were suggested by the circumstances of the present, the experiences of the past, and the prospects of the immediate future. "These testamentary addresses are stamped with the freshness and richness of the reminiscences of the aged lawgiver, with a freedom in expanding historical incidents, laws, and, above all, the Decalogue, which is scarcely conceivable except on the supposition that the speaker was that lawgiver himself.[13] The Deuteronomic Code thus enacted was a development, not as the Priestly Code had been on the side of the ritual, but considered as a Code for popular guidance in civil and religious matters. The enlargement, which we here find, of the simple regulations of the Book of the Covenant implies no longer interval and no greater change in the condition or constitution of the people than is provided for in the Biblical narrative. At the same time, the fact that we do

[13] F. Delitzsch, quoted by E. C. Bissell, The Pentateuch, p. 255 footn. (N. Y., 1885).

not find in Deuteronomy a ritual so elaborate and detailed as in the Priestly Code is not because the latter is the further development of a still later period, when ceremonies were multiplied and held in higher esteem, but simply because the Priestly Code was a professional book especially meant for priests in direct charge of the altar, and Deuteronomy a popular book for the guidance of the Israelites at large in matters more immediately within their province. Towards the close of the monarchy, the Deuteronomic Law alone needed to be re-enforced, inasmuch as the divine service, chiefly regulated by the Priestly Code, had long been carried out in accordance with its ritual precepts.[14] After the Exile, on the contrary, the Priestly Code was of paramount importance to the restored nation, for the simple reason that the Temple, its services, and all things connected therewith had been swept away by the unprecedented calamity from which Israel had just been rescued.

[14] The passages from Isaias, Amos, Jeremias, to which Critics triumphantly appeal as disproving the existence of the Priestly Code in the time of those prophets, do not bear this out. (Cf. von Orelli, and other commentators; J. Robertson, The Early Religion of Israel, p. 443 sqq. N. Y., 1892; J. Orr, The Problem of the Old Test., p. 155 sqq.; p. 324 sq. N. Y., 1905; W. Smith, The Book of Moses, p. 211 sqq.; p. 501 sq.).

Such, briefly sketched, is the other, and obviously most rational, manner to account for the differences which exist between the three sets of Hebrew legislation embodied in our Pentateuch.[15] Most reasonable it is to regard the Book of the Covenant as the Constitution framed at the very beginning of the Hebrew nation by the liberator of Israel. Most reasonable it is to admit that this Constitution, distinctly religious in character, was soon expanded into a ritual Law impregnated with Moses' memories of Egyptian outward worship. Most reasonable, finally, it is, to think that before dying, the same Moses exhorted, as we find in Deuteronomy, the people whom he had guided, and whom he was about to leave, to a thorough faithfulness in the service of the true God and their God. And all this naturally agrees with the manner in which the literary features of the Pentateuch point to Moses as the author of its contents.

All this traverses, it is true, the views freely circulated and widely accepted in Critical circles. But why should it not do so? Higher

15 This rational explanation is in direct conformity with Scriptural statements the obvious import of which Critics rule out in virtue of their evolutionary theories of Israel's religion.

Critics maintain that all Israel was not enslaved in Egypt, and was not, therefore, delivered by Moses. But was there ever a nation willing falsely to trace back its origin to such a degraded condition, and could not the deliverance from Egypt under the leadership of Moses be as distinctly and as faithfully remembered as the winning of American independence under the leadership of Washington, or the liberation of France under that of Joan of Arc? They assert that the Hebrews owed their belief in only one God to prophets living centuries after Moses, whereas these same prophets bear distinct witness to the fact that such belief was that of their nation ever since God freely chose it as His own people.[16] They affirm that the Deuteronomic Code originated in the closing years of the monarchy, ignoring all the while that this same Code contains laws the obvious import of which makes against that late date. Thus, Deuter. xvii. 14, 15 contemplates the Hebrew monarchy as a thing of the future, and lays down that the future king should not be a foreign born: on the one hand, this enactment is unintelligible on the part of a supposed lawgiver living at a time when his

[16] Cf. Amos ii. 9 sqq.; iii. 1 sqq.; Osee xi. 1; xii. 9 (Heb. verse 10).

nation had already had a long series of kings and was in no way tempted to set at its head a foreigner, seeing that for centuries the royal succession had been firmly established in the family of David; on the other hand, this same enactment is most intelligible on the part of Moses who naturally anticipated that after his death the Hebrews would desire a king like all other nations, and no less naturally forbade the election in such case of a foreign born, fully aware as he was of the misfortunes which had befallen Egypt when ruled over by a foreign dynasty. Again, Deuter. xx. 16-18 and Deuter. xxv. 17-9 decree the extermination of the Chanaanites and of the Amalekites respectively: now to refer the framing of such laws to the closing years of the monarchy is to make them meaningless, inasmuch as by that time both Chanaanites and Amalekites had ceased to be; whereas to ascribe them to the time of Moses is most natural, since these hostile tribes not only existed then, but had to be done away with for the very reasons which the lawgiver points out. With regard to the Priestly Writing, the views which obtain in Critical circles are likewise untenable. As this Priestly Writing explicitly refers the whole ceremonial Law to Moses, Critics freely charge

its supposed late authors with projecting back into Moses' time the ritual and institutions of their own age, with recasting throughout the documents at their disposal to make them conform with their late religious conceptions, and the same Critics never suspect that they themselves are open to a precisely similar charge when they mutilate, displace, interpret these same documents to make them fit with evolutionary theories of Israel's laws and institutions in their own day. Critics have no doubt that the said Priestly Writers were not able to view correctly the distant past history of their race, and they are not aware that at this much later date they themselves can hardly be better able to view correctly the history of a race singularly different from their own. Modern Critics assume that the laws of Israel grew like those of other nations; the Priestly Writing knows that it is not so. Hebrews kings did not make laws, but found them in existence, and were expected to comply with them; and the most minute enactments of the Priestly Code, in particular, are so accurately stamped with parallel details in Egyptian worship as to give indication of their origin in Moses' time. It will always look strange, whatever Modern Critics may say to

the contrary, that the Priestly Code, if framed after the Exile, as they assert, should contain a number of laws which were without a motive, and could not be carried out after the Exile.[17] To date, for instance, the command to kill the sacrifices only at the Tabernacle (Lev. xvii. 1 sqq.) from that late period in Jewish history is passing strange; in that period the Tabernacle existed no longer, and the appropriate time for the framing of the law in question is manifestly the forty years' Wandering in the Wilderness.

Again, had Higher Critics carefully weighed the terms of the three Pentateuchal Codes, viewed in their right order of time, they would never have claimed that the Hebrew legislation varied essentially as regards the centralization of worship in one place, or that only in the course of centuries the priestly office of offering sacrifices was restricted first to the whole Levitical tribe and next to the sole Levitical family of Aaron. From the very first, the Book of the Covenant evidently refers to only one place of national worship, when in general terms it bids Israel to appear three times a year before

[17] Cf. H. L. Strack, art. Pentateuch, in Schaff-Herzog, Ency. of Religious Knowl., vol. III, p. 1794 sq. (N. Y., 1887).

Jehovah (Exod. xxiii. 17), an expression which decidedly points to a centralization of the worship. In the next, the Priestly, Code, the Tabernacle is specified as this regular place wherever it may be set up. And in the last, the Deuteronomic, Code, it is simply laid down that this regular place shall not be shifted any more, but be the particular spot which Jehovah shall Himself designate in due time. The same absence of discrepancy exists between the three Codes in question, with regard to the Levitical ministers of the altar. In the Book of the Covenant these ministers are not mentioned at all, for the obvious reason that Moses had not yet appointed the Levites, i. e. the men of his own tribe, for the exclusive service of the sanctuary. In the Priestly Code these Levites are regularly organized, the simple Levites for the inferior services, and those of Aaronic descent for the priestly ministry under a high priest after the pattern of the Egyptian priesthood. And finally, in the Deuteronomic Code, these simple Levites are naturally regarded as already set apart for the divine service, and no less naturally recommended to the generosity of their fellow-Hebrews, for the provision of cities and lands in their own behalf, that is to say their main source

of income, is to take effect only after the settlement in Chanaan.

Finally, Critics think it strange, if Moses is the author of the Pentateuch, that this work should always speak of him in the third person, should contain statements indicative of a later authorship than his time, and conclude with the very account of his death. But why should this be considered strange? Such pagan writers as Thucydides, Xenophon, Cæsar,[18] and such sacred authors as Isaias, Osee, Amos, use the third person when speaking of themselves in works undoubtedly their own. Moreover, speaking of oneself in the third person was common in Egypt in Moses' time.[19] Some of the statements appealed to as pointing to a time later than Moses, point indeed to it. But why should they not be numbered among those glosses which, as every Scriptural scholar knows, were inserted into the sacred text long after the composition of a book of Holy Writ? Of course, the account of Moses' death at the end of Deuteronomy is not from his own pen. But why should such account be regarded as interfering

[18] Cf. W. Smith, The Book of Moses, p. 552 sq.; p. 556 sq. (London, 1868).

[19] Cf. G. Rawlinson, in "The Pulpit Commentary," Exodus, vol. I, p. xv.

with the Mosaic authorship of the books to which it is appended? Can it not be readily understood as an addition by a subsequent author who wished thereby to complete the record which these books contain of Moses' personal work and career? Cæsar's *Commentaries on the Gallic War* were indeed completed by Hirtius, a friend of his, through the addition of an eighth book, but nobody dreams of rejecting the traditional authorship by Cæsar of the seven preceding books on that account.

It is now time briefly to conclude. In the course of this Lecture, the immense labors and the great ingenuity of numerous workers in the field of Biblical Criticism have not been called into question. Acquainted, as it was his bounden duty to be for the last twenty-five years, with the writings of such Critics, the present Lecturer has had many an opportunity to notice and wonder at the knowledge of linguistics, the depth of research, the mastery of details, etc., of which the works referred to give evidence. He would therefore have deemed it an injustice to past generations of Critics, and also to his present audience, to speak disparagingly of the ability and industry of scholars whose views he did not see his way to share. It was his plain duty to

take into account the elements of truth included in theories which he felt could not be held on scientific grounds, and hence he has readily granted to his opponents that certain differences, literary and legislative, existed in the contents of our Pentateuch. At the same time, he has argued, as the interest of truth compelled him to do, that such differences with regard to these literary and legislative contents, far from disproving, distinctly strengthen the traditional position concerning the writings and mission of Moses, the great lawgiver of Israel. Within the short space of time at his disposal, he could do no more than to examine the leading positions of the thoroughgoing advocates of Modern Higher Criticism, and to point out the principal general reasons for rejecting them. In view of these reasons, there is no doubt that when the literary contents of the Pentateuch are inquired into, they are seen to be compatible with the traditional authorship of the work. There is likewise no doubt that the actual development of Hebrew legislation in the three Codes of the Pentateuch is rightly accounted for, not by the views of it which are prevalent in Critical circles, but by the traditional position from which Critics should never have departed. The particular elements of truth

brought out by the literary and historical investigation of the contents of the Mosaic writings are thus found to tally, as might be expected they would, with the general truth handed down by the proverbially tenacious tradition of Jews and Christians. Great, indeed, was the message it was given Moses to convey to Israel, second only it was to the message imparted by the Savior of mankind: "The Law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (John i. 17.)

PRINTED BY BENZIGER BROTHERS, NEW YORK.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 022 009 276 8

OTHER WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

General Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scriptures. 8vo, *net*, 2.50.

Part I. Biblical Canonics. Part II. Biblical Textual Criticism. Part III. Biblical Hermeneutics. Part IV. Biblical Inspiration. Facsimiles of Manuscripts, Inscriptions, etc.

General Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scriptures. Abridged Edition. 8vo, *net*, 1.50.

Special Introduction to the Study of the Old Testament.

Part I. The Historical Books. 8vo, *net*, 1.50.
Part II. The Didactic Books and Prophetic Writings. 8vo, *net*, 2.00.

Outlines of New Testament History. 8vo, *net*, 1.50.

"An excellent work—learned, brief, well-written, and interesting. It is especially adapted for seminaries, but every intelligent Catholic will derive great profit from its perusal, and it will be an invaluable aid for teachers in colleges, academies, and the higher classes of Christian doctrine."

—*Messenger of the Sacred Heart.*

Outlines of Jewish History, from Abraham to Our Lord. 8vo, *net*, 1.50.

The object of this volume is to present to the modern eye, in a vivid and accurate manner, the picture of the civilization which the Jews attained in the various periods of their national existence and to sketch briefly the history of the true religion from Abraham to the coming of Our Lord.

Christ's Teaching Concerning Divorce in the New Testament.

An Exegetical Study. Dedicated by Permission to His Eminence Cardinal Farley. 8vo, cloth, *net*, 1.50.

The present exegetical study was undertaken with the intimate conviction that a thorough investigation of the earliest documents of Christianity would supply a clear vindication of the indissoluble nature of Christian marriage as distinctly maintained by the living tradition of the Roman Church and solemnly proclaimed by the Council of Trent.